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Ross Launches Drive To Beat Kennedy

MONROE, La. (UPI) — Gov. Ross Barnett of Mississippi launched a campaign Tuesday night to weld the South into a beat - Kennedy machine and to elect a conservative president in 1964.

He or his heir-apparent as Mississippi's chief executive, Lt. Gov. Paul Johnson, was expected to fire the drive's second volley tonight at Baton Rouge, La., instead of Alabama Gov. George Wallace.

"We are convinced beyond any shadow of a doubt," Barnett told a fund-raising dinner for the Louisiana Committee for Free Electors, "that John Kennedy must be defeated in 1964 if this nation is to be saved."

"We are also convinced that our salvation does not lie within the Republicans," he added.

The Mississippi governor said the salvation lay in the unpledged elector plan, whereby southern states would withhold their electoral votes from candidates from both major parties.

Such a move, he explained, would deadlock the Electoral College and leave the House of Representatives the task of naming the president. He said a conservative could win as a compromise candidate in the House.

"The South can positively name the next president of the United States, and we are launching that campaign here tonight," Barnett said.

Wallace was scheduled to be the speaker at a similar fund-raising dinner sponsored by the same organization tonight but cancelled the appearance Tuesday when new

school desegregation crises developed in his state.

Louisiana State Sen. Harold Montgomery of Doyline, chairman of the Free Electors Committee, said Barnett told him after speaking either he or Johnson would replace Wallace in Baton Rouge.

Montgomery also said Wallace planned to address the Baton Rouge dinner briefly by telephone. Johnson last week won a lopsided victory in a Democratic gubernatorial runoff, and the Democratic nomination is considered tantamount to election. He waged a bitter anti-Kennedy campaign.

Barnett said in his speech here "the South has the political power not only to name presidents of this nation but to largely control the Congress if we stand united and unafraid."

He contended the racial issue was "being used as a smoke screen" to concentrate power in Washington.

"We are at this hour one short step from dictatorship in America," the segregationist governor said.